

Cath Petroskey - HB 4265 and HB 4266

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To: <cpetros@house.mi.gov>
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Subject: HB 4265 and HB 4266

To begin, I ask that you please forgive if my letter is not as organized or as eloquent as many that you probably receive; I am a farmer, not a writer.

My husband and I farm blueberries in Ottawa County. We recently purchased another tract of property that we are preparing for future farming. The land was cleared last summer and we are beginning the process of removing the stumps. This is also the time that we need to be starting to grow clippings into new bushes. The process requires the clippings to be planted in a compost and peat moss mixture. This morning, I called our local compost facility to inquire when they would be opening for the season. Much to my surprise, I was told that they may not be reopening,...EVER!

After a long discussion with Bernice Berens of IB Compost in Zeeland, Michigan, I learned that HB 4265 and HB 4266 would effectively shut down most composting businesses by rerouting their raw materials in landfills. I had heard mutterings of this last summer, but had assumed our state government was too intelligent to let some foolish thing like this happen.

Michigan is struggling in many areas. Why pass bills that would hurt local agriculture? As a farmer, **I am painfully aware that when we, as a country, cannot affordably and effectively feed our own population, we will be at the mercy of those counties that can feed us!** Our farm does not have the time, space, equipment or variety of material needed to produce clean, fresh, compost such as that which comes from IB Compost. This hurts our production, raises our prices, and in the end, gives a huge added edge to fruit coming into our country from places like Argentina and Chile. We already can barely compete with their costs because, unlike us, they are allowed to spray any chemical they choose, and hire anyone they choose. Please don't handicap us even further by taking away our affordable, local compost!

Thank you,
Betsy Cech
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